

NAIS: AT A GLANCE

What is NAIS?

Simply put, NAIS is a modern, streamlined information system that helps producers and animal health officials respond quickly and effectively to animal disease events in the United States. The NAIS program—a voluntary State-Federal-Industry partnership—is beneficial because it helps us protect U.S. livestock and poultry from disease spread, maintain consumer confidence in our food supply, and retain access to domestic and foreign markets.

USDA is not requiring participation in the program. NAIS can help producers protect the health and marketability of their animals—but the choice to participate is theirs.

Animal health officials across the country agree that premises registration, the foundation of NAIS, is a necessary first step to achieving these goals. Premises information ensures that producers will be notified quickly when a disease event might impact their area or the species of animals they have. In an animal health emergency, we cannot help producers protect their animals if we do not know they are there. By voluntarily registering their premises and providing contact information, producers will ensure that they receive the information they need—when they need it most—to protect their animals and their investment. In an emergency, animal health officials will be able to quickly locate at-risk animals and take precise actions to address the situation, minimize hardships, and speed disease eradication efforts as much as possible.

The voluntary NAIS also encompasses animal identification and animal movement tracing systems. These components are currently being refined by NAIS' industry and private sector partners. While the focus today is on premises registration, animal owners should know that the other components of NAIS will be additional options for them when they're ready to make decisions about what level of participation best suits their needs.

USDA is required by law to protect individuals' private information. Regardless of the level of participation animal owners choose, the voluntary NAIS is limited in terms of the type and quantity of information maintained by the Federal Government. At the Federal level, the system will hold and maintain only minimal premises information. Beyond the premises registration system, USDA will not "own" any additional data on participants in the system. If USDA needs animal movement and location information to respond to an animal health emergency, data will be requested from the private and State databases where it is held. Federal law protects individuals' private information and confidential business information from public disclosure.

Costs of Participating in the NAIS

Premises registration is free in all States and participating Tribes. NAIS participants will have the opportunity to choose which animal identification devices and which database they wish to use. (Participants should check with their respective State for the various options.) Participants will pay the cost of the animal identification devices and any fees that may be associated with participating in a database. The cost of animal identification methods will vary among species and will also depend on the device chosen by the animal owner, as well as whether the owner or a veterinarian applies the device. The cost will also be determined by the services that may be packaged with the device.

The animal tracking databases will be provided by industry organizations and State entities. Costs associated with the databases may vary depending on the services the producer/owner elects to use. Competition among these databases will help keep costs down.

Basic Steps for Participating in NAIS

Animal owners who are interested in taking part in the voluntary NAIS may participate in premises registration only, premises registration and animal identification, or all three components when the program is fully operational. The following information provides a brief explanation of how to participate in NAIS.

Step 1: Register your premises and obtain a Premises Identification Number.

To register your premises, contact your State (e.g., State Veterinarian office) or Tribal animal health authority. Contact information for each State and Tribe is provided in the Appendix of this document. Premises registration forms are available on each State's department of agriculture Web site; participants may opt to register their premises online or by mailing or faxing the forms to their State or Tribal NAIS contact. Part II (Premises Registration), located on pages 17-27, includes detailed information regarding the premises registration process.

Step 2: Identify your animals.

After you have registered your premises, you may participate in the animal identification component of the voluntary NAIS. Animals of the same species that typically move through the production chain as a group can be identified by a group/lot identification number (GIN), rather than by individual numbers. The GIN is determined by the animal owner using the premises identification number and the date the group was assembled. For more information about assigning animals a group/lot identification number, NAIS participants should refer to page 30 of Part III (Animal Identification).

Animals that move through commerce individually can be identified with a USDA-recognized animal identification number (AIN) tag or device. NAIS participants interested in identifying their animals individually should refer to pages 37-38 for the basic steps and requirements involved in obtaining and applying AIN tags and devices to their animals. Owners should contact authorized AIN manufacturers for the AIN device managers in their area. A list of authorized AIN devices and AIN manufacturers is available through the AIN Management System Information Web page (http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/animal_id/ain_mngt_sys.shtml). Identification devices can be applied by the owners themselves or by tagging service providers; additionally, owners can use approved tagging sites to apply the devices to their animals. We recommend that livestock owners first check with their States to find out what animal identification options and requirements may already be in place at that level.

Step 3: Choose an Animal Tracking Database (ATD) for tracing certain individual animal or group/lot movements.

After NAIS participants have registered their premises and identified their animals either individually or by group/lot, they may choose an ATD. USDA recognizes that every animal movement does not need to be recorded or reported. To ensure that the system is practical and workable for NAIS participants, only those movements that pose a greater risk of disease

transmission will be the focus of tracing efforts. A number of factors—the number of animals, their source(s), health status/certification, and nature and location of the event—influence disease risk. For a list of recommendations regarding reportable animal movements, please see page 47. Participants should contact State or local animal health officials if they are uncertain about the need to report an animal movement.

Private industry groups and States will operate and maintain the ATDs; NAIS participants can choose the ATD they wish to use for reporting animal movements. USDA will operate a portal or communication system that will enable animal health officials to submit requests for information to the ATDs in the event of a disease occurrence. A list of NAIS State and private databases that have an approved cooperative agreement with USDA is available on USDA/APHIS' Animal Identification Web site at www.usda.gov/nais.

For further information on how you can take part in this important initiative, please review the November 2006 User Guide and visit the USDA/APHIS Animal Identification Web site at www.usda.gov/nais. You may also call the USDA-NAIS Staff at (301) 734-0799 to request copies of NAIS documents.